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SUBJECT: RUSSIAN MFA CRITICIZES DAS BRYZA'S FINANCIAL TIMES
INTERVIEW

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells. Reasons: 1.4(B/D).

¶1. (C) MFA North America Deputy Director Vladimir Vinokurov contacted Political M/C November 2 to highlight the ministry's critical reaction to comments made about the Northern European Gas Pipeline (NEGP) by DAS Bryza in an October 30 Financial Times of Germany interview. Vinokurov told us the interview had "created some tension here." He said the MFA's understanding was that pipelines were to be assessed on their commercial potential and not on political grounds. The MFA was disappointed in the approach adopted in the interview and said Moscow did not believe U.S. officials should comment critically on bilateral economic issues between Russia and Germany. Political M/C responded that we would report the remarks to Washington, and noted that the U.S. expected Russia to live up to its G-8 energy security commitments and be a reliable and responsible energy supplier.

¶2. (C) Informal Embassy translation of the MFA Press Office commentary:

In Moscow, attention was focused on an October 30 interview by Deputy Assistant Secretary M. Bryza in the Financial Times of Germany in which he frightened German readers with the prospect of the construction of the Northern European Gas Pipeline. (Bryza said) "The NEGP will strengthen the dependence of Germany on Russian gas and then what could happen to you could be the same as what happened to Ukraine last winter."

We will not speak about the appropriateness of a representative of the U.S. government taking upon himself the responsibility of instructing Germany on how it should build cooperation with Russia in as important a field as the delivery of gas. One need only recall that some years ago American representatives also spoke out against the Blue Stream Pipeline with the same motivation, as if Turkey and Europe would fall into energy dependence on Russia. Life has shown how farfetched these warnings were -- Blue Stream became a successful example of Russian-Turkish energy cooperation and its expansion is now being examined.

Unfortunately, the impression is being created that the U.S. opposition, first to Blue Stream and now to the NEGP, is not based on concerns about the energy security of Europe, but on the principle (as confessed by some American officials) that good gas pipelines are those which go around Russia.

Even in the most difficult times Russia never violated its obligations to deliver gas to its European partners. The decision to reorient to Europe part of the unique Shtokman gas field guarantees the stable delivery of Russian gas to Europe for many decades. A durable energy partnership with Russia based on the mutual responsibility of producers and consumers of energy resources, and not on artificial energy schemes, is the authentic guarantee of energy security for Europe.

